

# **River Corridor Vegetation Management**

## **City of Santa Fe River Commission**

DRAFT 5/4/15

### **Goal**

To define parameters for City staff, contractors, and volunteers to maintain vegetation in the River corridor.

### **Permission**

Volunteers are required to have permission, either as individuals or part of a community group, in order to do vegetation management. Either the City Parks division or the River Coordinator may grant permission, not to exceed one year in duration.

The scope of work should be included with the request and outlined in City's granting permission.

### **Safety**

In any case where safety is perceived to be a problem, appropriate plan should be in place before work is performed. Vehicular traffic and dead trees, dead tree limbs, steep banks, broken bottles, and trash are some of the more common hazards.

Hazards in the corridor include human fecal material (carry disease) and hypodermic needles (hepatitis infection risk for up to 2 months after use).

Another form of safety is to maintain the corridor in a manner that minimizes potential for flooding of adjacent homes and businesses. Trees should not be allowed to grow in places where high-flow events will be impeded by debris, logs, and other objects.

If high-flow obstruction situations are noted that can not easily be addressed, City parks or river coordinator shall be notified. For example, large downed trees can float down the River during high-flow events, subsequently blocking culverts or bridges, resulting in flooding.

## **Placement of trimmed material**

All tree limbs and brush shall be placed in approved location or area, or taken to the transfer station. Smaller material shall be placed in trash bags or trash receptacles to prevent wind distribution.

Rocks, construction debris, and trash should be kept separate from vegetative material, so that vegetative material can be recycled.

## **Dead & down vegetative material**

Dead and down vegetation may be removed, not to exceed 150 pounds per object.

## **Tree Trimming**

No branch greater than 4" diameter shall be removed by volunteers.

## **Tree Removal**

Elms may be removed under the following restrictions:

1. Tree removal of elms requires application of glyphosphate by approved application staff within 10 minutes of cutting of tree.
2. Caution should be used to insure no glyphosphate enters flowing water or pools of standing water.
3. Appropriate use guidelines should be followed by approved application staff. Glyphosphate application is to be performed only by City staff with appropriate training. Any exceptions will be in writing and in effect for more than one month.
4. Only city staff or trained and approved contractors or volunteers may remove trees greater than 4 inches in diameter.
5. Cottonwoods that are from 1 inch to 12 inches high shall be given at least 5 feet radius away 'breathing room' where all elms are removed.
6. Cottonwoods that are from 1 foot to 4 feet high shall be given at least 9 feet radius away 'breathing room' where all elms are removed.
7. Cottonwoods that are from 4 foot to 10 feet high shall be given at least 12 feet radius away 'breathing room' where all elms are removed.
8. Thinning of extensive elm stands is allowed via removal of smallest stems.
9. General goal of elm removal should be to allow more resources (light, soil, nutrients) for native shrubs, grasses, and trees.

Other non-native trees may be removed with approval of parks or river coordinator.

## **Power Tool Use**

Power tools such as chainsaws shall not be used without appropriate training and approval from Parks Department.

## **Community Notification**

Any project which will remove more than 10 trees requires 1-week advance notification posted within 300 yards both upstream and downstream of the activity, preferably in location with high volume of foot traffic. The City river coordinator shall maintain a list of trees that neighbors have explicitly requested not be removed, however, it is up to the City Parks and/or the river coordinator if such trees need to be removed for safety or other reasons.

Any project which uses glyphosphate application requires appropriate public notification.

## **Visual and Aural Impact**

Growth and downed tree limbs provide a sound and visual barrier. Removal of large quantities of elms and downed debris, and other dead growth, can substantially change the characteristics to nearby neighbors and passers-by. Consideration should be given to the rate at which these materials are removed, unless flood control is a particular consideration.

## **Definitions**

Glyphosphate - a broad-spectrum [systemic herbicide](#). The federal environmental protection agency (EPA) is in process of reviewing toxicity and has released draft guidelines to manufacturers (March 2015). The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in March 2015 that it is 'probably carcinogenic in humans'.

Native trees: cottonwood,

Non-native shrubs, weeds, and grasses:

Non-native trees: Siberian elm,

River corridor – area within 30 feet either side of 100 year flood plain boundary of the Santa Fe River within Santa Fe City limits.

Vegetation management -- Planting, trimming, or removal of shrubs, trees, and grasses within the River corridor.